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## GEOGRAPHICAL RECORD

### THE AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

**Professor Vidal de la Blache receives the Daly Medal.** The Hon. William G. Sharp, the United States Ambassador to France, in behalf of the American Geographical Society, presented the Daly Medal to Professor Vidal de la Blache, the distinguished French geographer, on June 24. The presentation took place at Ambassador Sharp's house in the presence of ten or twelve of Professor de la Blache's confrères. Details will be published in a later number of the *Bulletin*.

### NORTH AMERICA

**Our National Forests.** Secretary of Agriculture Houston has adopted regulations for administering the new law which provides that national forest land may be leased for summer home sites and other recreational purposes in tracts of five acres or less for periods not to exceed thirty years. More than 2,000 cottages have been built in the forests by summer residents under the permit system which has now been supplemented by the new law. In 1914, farmers and local settlers of all classes who needed timber for their own use in the construction of houses, barns, fences, etc., were given free more than 120,000,000 feet of national forest timber, while about 14,000,000 feet were sold to settlers, ranchers and others at cost prices. (*Amer. Forestry*, June, 1915, pp. 737-747.)

**Yosemite National Park.** The Department of the Interior is distributing free its pamphlet "The Yosemite National Park. Season of 1915" to all who write for it. It gives the latest information as to the park, its survey, waterfalls, big trees, routes, hotels, camps, literature, etc. The fact seems not generally to be considered that the Yosemite National Park is not identical with the famous Yosemite Valley; in fact, the valley is a very small part of this great public pleasure ground.

**The Century Atlas to be Sold as a Separate Volume.** The Century Atlas and the Cyclopedia of Names, which are part of the Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia, have heretofore been sold only in connection with that work. As the atlas has been one of the most complete and authoritative atlases for popular use published in our country, the fact that it could be obtained only by purchasing the dictionary has been regretted by geographers. They will be pleased to learn that the Century Company has just announced that the Atlas and the Cyclopedia of Names are now to be sold as separate volumes.

**Progress of the Reclamation Service.** The *13th Annual Report* of the Reclamation Service (1913-1914) says that during 1913 the production on the areas already reclaimed by water exceeded \$15,700,000 in value. In the spring of 1914 additional areas of heretofore untilled land were brought into productive condition. In the twelve years since the passage of the Reclamation Act 1,300,000 acres of land have been reclaimed. The work has been planned to reclaim at least double this area. As the farmers till more land it will be possible, with relatively less additional cost, to extend or complete the details of construction until nearly 3,000,000 acres have been supplied with water. Alfalfa is the basis of success in all the projects with clover next among the hay crops. Among the grains, wheat, oats and barley are of greatest importance. Substantial areas of fruit are also grown on a number of the projects, notably in Arizona, Colorado and Washington. An advance in intensive farming is shown by the increased acreage devoted to vegetables and other crops requiring great care and attention. Potatoes are widely produced and sugar beets have become a highly important crop. In 1913 about 90 per cent. of the irrigated area was cropped. At the present time no irrigation systems of large importance are being planned and built. There are many projects, but they are halted for lack of funds. Most of the *Report* is devoted to the details of the work done and its results.

**Work for the Betterment of Alaskan Natives.** About 25,000 native Alaskans are scattered in small villages along the thousands of miles of coast line and on the great rivers of Alaska. The latest government report on the work done in their behalf (*U. S. Bureau of Education Bull. No. 31, 1914*) says that 77 schools were maintained in the villages during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1913, and that the enrollment was 3,563 pupils. Every teacher is a social worker, who, in addition to performing the routine work of the school room, is expected to promote, in every possible way, the physical, moral and industrial welfare of the adults as well as the children. The aim is so to instruct the children as to help them to live comfortably and to deal intelligently with those whom they meet. Instruction in carpentry, cooking and sewing is emphasized. Each school house is a social center and many of the buildings contain, besides the recitation room and industrial room, kitchen, rooms for the teacher and a laundry and baths for the native community.

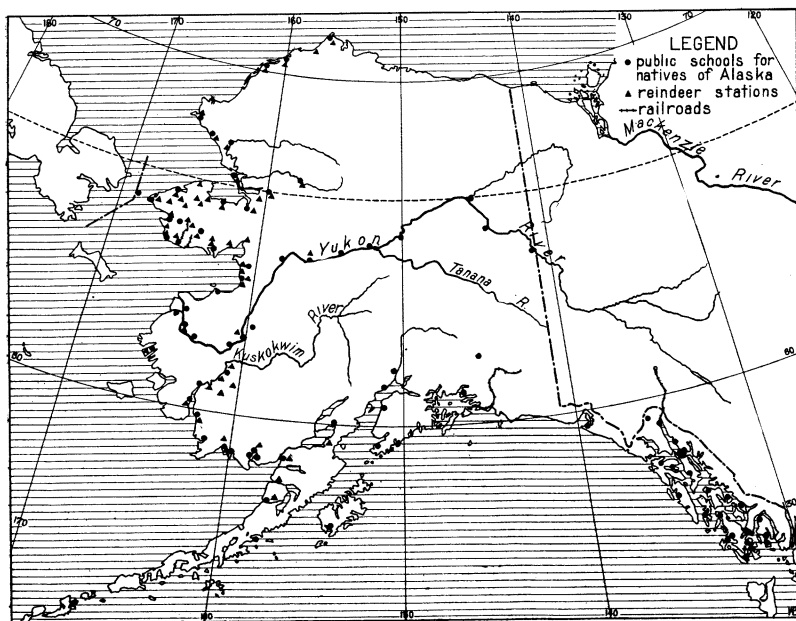


FIG. 1.

Reindeer herding has within ten years become a large, wealth-producing native industry in northern and western Alaska. The 30,532 reindeer now owned by the natives are worth \$763,300. The income of the natives from this industry during the year was \$66,966 exclusive of the meat and hides used by the natives themselves.

The Bureau of Education is now encouraging the establishment of coöperative stores and enterprises owned and managed by the natives themselves. They are thus relieved of the burden of the middleman's profit, can secure necessities at the lowest prices and at their own stores obtain fair value for their furs, ivory, baskets and other native products. A number of these stores have been established and are doing well.

The territorial legislature has made school attendance obligatory upon all normal native children between the ages of eight and sixteen residing within one mile of a public school. Provision for the medical and sanitary relief of the Eskimos, Indians, Aleuts and other natives of Alaska is imperative. Detailed reports by teachers, superintendents and the public health service conclude the report.

**Warm and Cold Winters in the Eastern United States.** A study of the conditions which produce warmer and colder winters in the eastern United States (*Monthly Weather Review*, Vol. 42, 1914, pp. 672-675) leads Professor W. J. Humphreys to conclusions which throw light on the possibility of long-range seasonal forecasts. The character of the winter of the eastern United States, whether that be mild (marine) or severe (continental), is largely determined by the location and development of the Bermuda "high." If this high be persistent, we have unusually mild conditions, as, we may note, was the case two winters ago. If the high is absent, exceptionally low temperatures prevail. The cause of the Bermuda high seems to be a minimum surface temperature of the water along the tropical high pressure belt, and this low temperature may depend upon the temperature and the strength of the Labrador current. If this be so, gaugings of this current ought to furnish some basis for forecasting the character of the weather in the eastern United States, perhaps two weeks or a month in advance. This study by Professor Humphreys is along lines similar to those followed so successfully by Meinardus, Pettersson and others in Europe. It is, doubtless, in connection with such correlations as these that our hope of long-range forecasts lies.

R. DEC. WARD.

**Snowfall of the Eastern United States.** Dr. Charles F. Brooks, of the U. S. Bureau of Plant Industry, has made a notable contribution to American climatology in his detailed and critical study of the snowfall of the eastern United States (*Monthly Weather Review*, Vol. 43, No. 1, 1915, pp. 2-11). The average monthly snowfall (inches) from September to May is shown in a series of nine original charts. There are also original charts of the average mean annual snowfall (inches) for the period 1895-1913; the average number of snowfall days (inches); and the directions of the snow-bearing winds from December to March (monthly charts). The text contains several diagrams giving details regarding the monthly distribution, and the average, maximum, minimum and extreme range of annual snowfall about the Great Lakes (1895-1910). It appears that the average distribution of snowfall in the eastern United States is controlled by the temperatures and the amount of moisture. The lake region, the Appalachians and the North Atlantic coast have the heaviest snowfall. The snowfall of the northwest is moderate because of the deficiency of moisture. Topography and the exposure to moist winds locally modify the amounts of snowfall. The northeast wind, being both cold and damp, is the wind which brings the great snowstorms over nearly all of the eastern United States. The northwest wind is generally dry, and therefore usually brings only snow flurries, except locally on windward slopes or in the lee of the Great Lakes.

R. DEC. WARD.

**Educational Geography.** Three of the courses offered at the summer session of the University of California this summer are devoted to the geography of California and the Pacific Coast. Associate Professor Ruliff S. Holway lectured on the physiography of California and conducted a field class in physiography for the observation and interpretation of topographic forms as illustrated in the vicinity of San Francisco Bay. Mr. Cary T. Wright, Instructor in Economics, had charge of classes on commerce of the Pacific and physical geography in the high school.

The department of Botany in the University of Chicago will give a course in field ecology in Northern Michigan, to be conducted by Dr. George D. Fuller, from about July 25 to Sept. 1.

One of the features of the University of Oregon summer school this year was a nature study expedition by mountain trail with pack animals from Eugene, the seat of the University, to Crater Lake. Professor Albert R. Sweetser (Botany) and Professor Warren D. Smith (Geology) accompanied the party and gave daily talks on their subjects. The region traversed was of especial geological and historical interest. It was there that the Modoc Indian wars were fought to the south of Crater Lake. The Department of Geology has been giving a course in geography during the past semester. This will probably be made a full year course next year and will hereafter be a required study in the School of Commerce. The basis of the course was a study of the resources of Oregon, but

lectures were also given on mathematical geography, oceanography, political geography, distribution of religions, geography in history, and the geography of some of the most important commodities. Each student was required to prepare a thesis covering the various economic resources of the State.

#### SOUTH AMERICA

**Appointment of a Boundary Commission in Venezuela.** A note communicated on February 28, 1914, by the Chilean minister at Caracas to his government and reproduced in the *Boletín de Relaciones Exteriores* (December, 1914, p. 25), announces the appointment of a Venezuelan boundary commission to be known as the "Comisión Topográfica de Fronteras." The compilation of a boundary map and the maintenance of boundary posts and monuments is entrusted to the Commission, which will also undertake economic surveys of the Venezuelan frontier.

**Economic Effect of the War on South America.** The interdependence of economic conditions the world over is well illustrated by the effect of the war on South America. In Argentina foreign trade was seriously hampered by the suspension of traffic by the German steamship lines and the partial interruption of service of the British, French and Italian lines. The tonnage of in- and outgoing vessels for Buenos Aires in August, 1914, amounted to 188,000 tons as compared with 312,000 tons for August, 1913. In August and September, 1914, only 177 foreign vessels entered this port as against 327 during the same months of 1913. Scarcity of coal also reduced the amount of railroad and river traffic. In Chile, early in the war, the nitrate plants practically suspended operations. This led to a congestion of unemployed in Santiago and other cities, which delayed a full resumption of activities, when adjustment had been made to the new conditions. The rise in the cost of living was partially met by temporarily revoking the import duty on Argentine cattle. Advances in the cost of food also occurred in Brazil and were accentuated by the interruption of coastwise trade. But the main hardship has been the reduction in the customs revenue. In Argentina the income from this source from January to September, 1914, was 60,000,000 pesos less than for the corresponding period of the preceding year, and the budget deficit for 1914 is estimated to be 80,000,000 pesos. (P. Gast, in *Weltwirtschaft*, March, 1915.)

#### AFRICA

**Along the Congo-Zambezi Water Parting.** The *Geographical Journal* (June, pp. 536-538) presents a sketch map and notes received from Mr. T. S. Schindler, who has made several trips along the extreme northern extremity of the Zambezi system. This region is not only interesting as the divide between two great river systems, but is also attracting attention as the natural route for the railroad, now partly constructed, to connect the great mining region of south-eastern Katanga with the port of Lobito in Angola, thus providing the shortest and best route for transporting these minerals to the sea. Mr. Schindler says that agricultural development will result from the completion of the railroad. The population is comparatively large. Cattle do well and there seems no doubt that wheat may be cultivated on this higher land in the dry season by irrigation. Most European vegetables will grow and the large variety of vegetables, and fruits raised by the natives thrives finely. The rainfall is adequate and amounted in the last wet season to over 52 inches, which is probably below the average.

#### ASIA

**The Continental Shelf of the Northern Indian Ocean.** In a recent number of the *Beiträge zur Geophysik* (Vol. 13, 1914, No. 5-6, pp. 349-384, with Pls. IV and V) G. Ziemendorff discusses the continental shelf of the northern part of the Indian Ocean. The title, "Der Kontinentalschelf des Indischen Ozeans," is somewhat too promising, as the paper, due to the insufficiency of the source material, deals only with that portion of the coast which extends from the island of Socotra to the mouth of the Ganges. The first part of the paper

consists of an exclusively descriptive discussion of the altitude and width of the continental shelf along this coast, based on the British Admiralty charts, which is accompanied by a valuable series of profiles, 100 in number. Among these are the five showing the submarine valley of the Indus in cross-section. Its general configuration is indicated in the following table, adapted from the one given in the paper.

SUBMARINE VALLEY OF THE INDUS

| Off-shore distance of profile | Width of valley | Maximum depth of valley bottom under sea level | Mean depth of valley bottom under continental shelf |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 9.3 miles                     | 4.7 miles       | 420 ft.                                        | 289 ft.                                             |
| 20.8                          | 5.6             | 1050                                           | 771                                                 |
| 32.6                          | 11.8            | 1847                                           | 1621                                                |
| 45.7                          | 9.9             | 1020                                           | 764                                                 |
| 73.0                          | 12.4            | 3786                                           | 3143                                                |

The valley lies off the Vatho mouth of the Indus and extends in a south-southwest direction. Its width is a marked feature, as the above table shows. At the third and fifth profiles it is about as wide as the Connecticut Valley at Springfield. Its *talweg* lies nearer the western side. The occurrence of a submarine threshold about 45 miles off shore is evident from the table; the depth here rises to 767 feet from a depth 950 feet greater.

In the second part of the paper the structural relations of the continental shelf to the coast are somewhat superficially discussed. Here again, it is India which engages our attention. Conditions on the west and on the east coast are strongly contrasted. The west coast is accompanied by a wide, the east coast by a narrow shelf. The outer border of the west coast shelf is almost rectilinear between Karachi and Cape Comorin and thus attains great width where the coast recedes, as at the Gulf of Cambay: here it is over 200 miles wide. Its mean width is about 60 miles. On the east, from the Ganges delta to Cape Comorin, the shelf closely accompanies the coast; its mean width is about 16 miles. This condition is the opposite of what might be expected, when it is remembered that the peninsula is almost wholly drained to the east. The sediments of such rivers as the Cauvery, Kistna, Godavari, and Mahanadi might be expected to enlarge the continental shelf. Instead they actually encroach upon it, so that here we have the unusual case of a coastal shelf being diminished by sedimentation. The rivers do deposit a load commensurate with their size, but in the form of an alluvial coastal plain, and it is this which is being built up at the expense of the coastal shelf. The author has therefore measured the width of the coastal plain and added it to that of the coastal shelf; the total gives an average width of about 43 miles, which does not contrast so greatly with that of the west coast. Given the known fact that the geology of the area at the time of the formation of the continental shelf was essentially as it is now, the author sees in these conditions confirmation of the belief, held, among others, by Oldham, that the west coast is sinking while the east coast is rising.

#### AUSTRALASIA AND OCEANIA

**The Coast of New Caledonia.\*** The mountainous island of New Caledonia, a French colony, nearly 250 miles in length, lying northeast of Australia, is remarkable for the extensive system of barrier reefs by which it is enclosed. Its well-embayed coast line testifies to recent submergence and thus supports Darwin's theory of coral reefs; but in one respect the coast of this island is strikingly exceptional: its southeastern end and much of its northeastern side are cut back in strong sea cliffs, 500 or 1,000 feet in height, from which a second exceptional feature is to be inferred, namely, that no coral reefs enclosed this part of the coast while the cliffs were cut. The period of cliff cutting must have been about as long as, and contemporaneous with, the period of valley erosion; but since the valleys were eroded they have been transformed into bays by partial

\* Abstract of an address by Professor William M. Davis, in April last, at the meeting of the Association of American Geographers and the American Geographical Society in New York City.

submergence; hence the cliffs also must be partly submerged; the base line of the cliffs along the former shore, like the stream lines at the former valley mouths, must now lie several hundred feet below sea level; in this third peculiarity New Caledonia resembles Tahiti, but differs from other Pacific islands. Finally the last phase of the submergence, by which the cliff base-line and the valley mouths were drowned, involved a rapid subsidence preceding the process of the present period, for the small sea cliffs, lately cut by the waves of the reef-enclosed lagoon, are fronted by a flat platform, the width of which is about as great as the height of the small cliffs.

**The Future of the Solomon Islands.** *Tropical Life* for April, 1915, contains a short paper with this title in which an account of the islands is given and their importance for the production of copra is described. The soil is very fertile, volcanic in origin, mixed with coral limestone; and with the rainfall averaging 90-200 inches and a very humid climate, the coconut palm flourishes and bears very heavy crops. Some 25,000 acres are now under coconut plantations in the various islands. The palms come into bearing early, and the writer records that he saw a tree under six years old bearing considerably more than 300 nuts, which is by no means a record for these islands. As the Solomon group lies on the direct route between Australia and the Philippines and Japan, its importance is likely to increase in the near future.

## EUROPE.

**The Geography of the North Sea Region.** An interesting lecture on the geography of the North Sea by Dr. A. Merz before the Berlin Geographical Society on April 10 is reported by Professor O. Baschin in the May number (Vol. 3, No. 20) of *Die Naturwissenschaften*. The economic importance of this favored region is shown by the following illuminating facts. From the lands bordering the North Sea come one-third of the world's coal production and one-half of the iron output; one-half of all the cotton manufacturing of the world is centered in this region, whose fifty harbors are the ports of origin of about one-third of the world's shipping; and its waters supply one-fifth of the total fishery output of the world.

The remainder of the lecture dealt mainly with the North Sea itself and its coasts. The area of the continental shelf of western Europe is given as 540,000 square miles, including the 121,000 square miles of the British Isles. The area of the North Sea is given as 220,000 square miles, if its seaward limits, as Dr. Merz proposes, be considered to lie, in the south, at the Strait of Dover, in the north, along a line connecting the Orkneys with the Shetland Islands and the mouth of North Fjord on the Norwegian coast (62° N.); and in the east, on a line running from Cape Skagen, the northernmost point of Denmark, northeast to Mollösund on the Swedish coast, thus including the Skager Rak. The two openings through which the North Sea communicates with the ocean (Strait of Dover, 20 miles wide; Peterhead-Stavanger opening, 280 miles wide) admit the warm currents from the Atlantic, thus preventing any of the ports from becoming ice-bound in winter. These facts, added to the location of the North Sea near the pole of the land hemisphere, supply the physical basis for the commercial preeminence to which this origin is predestined by the above-mentioned economic conditions.

The coasts of the North Sea belong to various physical types. The coast of Denmark, Germany, Holland, Belgium and the northernmost part of France is a dune coast, characterized by a dune wall of greater or less elevation behind which extend the marshes whose depression below high water mark has necessitated the construction of dikes. While this dune wall is continuous on the Danish and Belgian coasts, it is interrupted at frequent intervals on the German and Dutch coasts. Back of the fringe of barrier beach islands thus created lie funnel-shaped estuaries leading to large rivers which drain an important hinterland. The conditions are thus present for the growth of great harbors. In Holland the two most important ports, Amsterdam and Rotterdam, lie more than 12 miles from the coast and are connected with the sea by canals at whose mouths lie respectively Ymuiden, the fishing center, and Hook of Holland, the

starting point for steamship lines to England. The only harbor of importance on the Belgian coast is Ostend, which is kept open artificially and access to which is impeded by the Flemish Banks. West of Calais the low dune coast gives way to a steep cliff coast formed by the truncation of the Cretaceous and Jurassic ridges which, prior to the Glacial Period, connected England with the Continent (the North Downs on the English side, the Collines de l'Artois on the French side).

The British North Sea coast clearly reflects the structure of the islands. Alternate hard and soft bands of rocks are truncated obliquely by the coast, so that by wave and tide action deep bays have been eroded into the softer rocks, thus affording the conditions suitable to the development of harbors. Thus the Thames estuary is eroded into the soft Tertiary rocks of the London Basin. Farther to the north the coast of Suffolk and Norfolk is a cliff coast accompanied by shoals, so that only small fishing towns have developed. To the north, the reentrant of the Wash breaks through the Cretaceous cuesta and penetrates far inland. It shallows into mud flats, bordered by marshy fens, similar to the "watten" and "polders" respectively on the landward side of the Frisian islands. The next indentation is the Humber estuary. The fact that it carries ocean navigation 14 miles inland and forms the gateway to the rich agricultural section of York and the industrial region of the midland counties explains the development of the important harbors on its shores, Hull, with a population of 300,000, and Grimsby, with 70,000, the latter a fishing center deriving its wealth from the Dogger Bank fisheries. To the north the coast becomes steep and rocky. The coal-bearing series here strike the coast, forming the foundation of the prosperity of the Tyne ports. Twenty million tons of coal are mined annually in this district. Newcastle, with 500,000 inhabitants, is also the center of the ship-building industry of England with its 34 plants.

In Scotland steep abrasional coasts prevail; the principal indentation is the Firth of Forth, with numerous coal harbors, on which also lies Edinburgh. The Norwegian coast presents a totally different type. Here the fiords predominate, long, deep and narrow arms of the sea which penetrate as much as 100 miles into the highland. Their origin is often due to structural lines; their formation mainly to glacial erosion during the Ice Age. The accompanying coastal terrace which has been broken up into numberless skerries is the main seat of the population. The inhabitants are chiefly sailors and fishermen.

**Isomeric Rainfall Maps of the British Isles.** A contribution to our knowledge of the rainfall of the British Isles, by Dr. H. R. Mill and Mr. Carle Salter appears in the *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society*, Vol. XLI, 1915, pp. 1-39. Reference is made to the earlier work of Gaster (*British Rainfall*, 1867 and 1868) and of Mellish, who submitted to the Society in 1900 maps showing the percentage of annual rainfall in each season for the period 1866-1890, and was probably the first to treat the matter cartographically. The results obtained by these earlier authors are now largely confirmed, but it is shown that ten years is too short a period for variations due to exceptionally wet months to be smoothed out. The period now considered is 35 years, 1875-1909, and the number of stations used was about 300, distributed as uniformly as possible. This period, although not fixing the monthly averages, probably indicates the normal type of seasonal march. The average monthly rainfall is expressed as a percentage of the average annual fall at each station, and the results are shown cartographically in twelve monthly and four seasonal charts, which are termed *isomeric*, the lines upon them indicating equal proportions of the annual average fall. The most interesting features are the occurrence of two types of seasonal march. The western, or wet, districts, have a maximum fall in winter and a minimum in summer, while the eastern or dry districts show a maximum in summer and a minimum in winter. The equinoctial maps show the transitional stages between these two extremes, the spring months having everywhere a low rainfall, and small range, with a central maximum inland and a peripheral minimum around the coast, and the autumn months a large rainfall with a central minimum and a peripheral maximum. There is strong evidence for believing that the seasonal march depends upon the geographical position of the station.

R. DEC. WARD.

**Oceanic Researches at a Standstill.** Prof. Otto Pettersson, the Swedish oceanographer, has been appointed President of the International Oceanographical Investigations Committee, to succeed Dr. Rose, who resigned because of the war. A plan of work had been mapped out for the various countries participating, but since the war began the investigations have come to a standstill. Sweden, however, has mapped out some work for the season 1915-16. (*Geogr. Zeitschr.*, Vol. 21, 1915, No. 5, p. 293.)

**Winter Weather as a Factor in the War.** In the paper with this title read in April at the joint meeting of the Association of American Geographers and the American Geographical Society, Professor R. DeC. Ward said that Gen. von Hindenburg's great advance in East Prussia early in February would have been far more successful if the frost and hard ground, which favored the German movement at the start, had not been followed by an unexpected and general thaw, resulting in muddy roads, difficult marching, and consequent delays. The two jaws of the German trap failed to meet at the right time, and through the opening a large part of the Russians escaped. In the mud of Poland the heavy, low German armored motors, built for use on hard roads, had often been almost or quite useless, while the lighter Russian motors, built for use on soft ground, had proved far more serviceable. In the wintry gales over the Channel and the North Sea, England had her most valuable ally against a general Zeppelin raid. It was significant that every German air raid had been made at the time of a fog. In all these cases the German airmen escaped from their pursuers by reason of the fog. The naval operations in the Dardanelles had shown striking dependence upon weather conditions. The first engagement took place in fine weather, but operations were later suspended several times on account of bad weather. The storms which caused the trouble belong to a type which is most frequent in spring, and would diminish as summer advanced. Egypt owes its remarkable immunity from outside attack to its strategic position in the desert. A strong Turkish movement, with heavy artillery, to the Suez Canal, was bound to be difficult and slow. Any serious assault of this kind was to be discounted in advance. A spell of foggy weather, which had apparently been accurately forecasted by the German meteorological observers in Belgium, was chosen for the German naval raid on the east coast of England in mid-December.

In most wars, in our latitudes, spring has brought many of the greatest battles and much of the fiercest fighting. The outburst of military activity in the spring is the natural response to the more genial conditions, when the ice and snow are gone; when the roads are drier, transportation is easier, sickness and suffering less. As the winter of 1914-15 merged into spring, and the spring into summer, it was to be expected that the war would be waged with renewed energy and that the fighting would be fiercer and more disastrous than any that had preceded.

**Meteorological Activity in Germany.** The annual Report of the operations of the Prussian Meteorological Institute (Berlin, 1915) brings evidence of the effects of the war in decreasing the number of the regular staff of officials. More than half the men employed at the central office of the Institute have gone to the war, some as members of the military weather service. The work at the central office and, to a less extent, at the Potsdam Observatory, has suffered in consequence, but in the main the regular activities have been continued. The next year's work will, however, show more marked effects of the war, according to the Director. Many of the observers at stations of the upper classes have gone to fight, but substitutes have, in most cases, been found, so that, up to the time of preparing this report, few series of observations have been broken, except along the Russian frontier. A large number of rainfall and of thunderstorm stations have, however, necessarily been abandoned.

In the usual appendix, containing scientific memoirs, the papers of most general interest are those by Dr. Hellmann, on the construction of rainfall charts, and one by Dr. Arendt on thunderstorm rainfalls.

In a recent number of the *Abhandlungen* (Vol. V, No. 2, 1915) of the Prussian Meteorological Institute, Dr. Hellmann presents a complete classification of all forms of condensation and precipitation. This is a very useful discussion.

R. DEC. WARD.

## GENERAL

**Deserts.** In a paper entitled "Deserts" (*Scott. Geogr. Mag.*, Vol. 31, 1915, No. 5, p. 241) by Prof. J. W. Gregory, he says that deserts are not absolutely unreclaimable and many once desert areas are now in profitable occupation owing to a better knowledge of how to use their slight and irregular rainfall. When suitably watered, deserts may be extremely prolific; for their soils are often rich in immediately available plant foods which have accumulated during a long period of rest. Desert soils especially accumulate salts of potash and lime, which would be leached out of them by a heavier rainfall. The desert soils, moreover, are often very deep, and their crops are nourished from an unusually thick layer.

## PERSONAL

Dr. Hermon C. Bumpus, formerly Professor of Zoology at Brown University and later Director of the New York Museum of Natural History, was installed as President of Tufts College on June 12.

Dr. William H. Dall of the U. S. Geological Survey and the Smithsonian Institution and Mr. Otto H. Tittmann, recently Superintendent of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, received the degree of Doctor of Laws at the recent Commencement of George Washington University.

Dr. R. M. Harper carried out his principal field work this year in February and March, in central Florida, where he gathered additional data for his report on the geography and resources of that section. His report is likely to be published next winter.

Professor D. W. Johnson of Columbia University has been elected President of the Physiographer's Club of New York for the ensuing year. The club held a field meeting on the Palisades, north of New York City, on Saturday, June 5.

Professor H. G. Lyons will be President of the Section of Geography at the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Manchester, England, September 7-11.

Mr. F. H. Newell, who was consulting engineer of the U. S. Reclamation Service and Director of the Service, 1907-1914, has accepted the position of head of the civil engineering department of the University of Illinois. His address is 1109 California Street, Urbana, Ill.

Assistant Professor George E. Nichols of Sheffield Scientific School, Yale University, is continuing this summer his work on the ecology of the vegetation of northern Cape Breton Island which he began last year.

Edward Van Dyke Robinson, Professor of Economics in the University of Minnesota, has been appointed Professor of Economics in Columbia University with special oversight and direction of the teaching of undergraduates. Professor Robinson was graduated from the University of Michigan in 1890. He took his Ph.D. at Leipzig in 1895.

## OBITUARY

**WALTER JENNEY.** Mr. Jenney, President of the Appalachian Mountain Club, died on May 3. He was an original member of the club and served as Vice-President in 1912-1913 and President in 1914-1915.